

Statement of Support Raised Bill 5503

On behalf of the American Heart Association, I would like to thank the Members and Chairs of the Joint Committee on Public Law for introducing Raised Bill No. 5503, "An Act Requiring Automatic External Defibrillators in Health Clubs.

The American Heart Association supports Raised Bill 5503 because it will not only help ensure placement of AEDs in health facilities (listed as one of the top ten locations for incidence of Sudden Cardiac Arrest), but R.B. 5503 will also expand Good Sam protection for the organizations/entities that have equipped themselves with AEDs in order to help save a life. **Providing liability protection for the individual and entity is crucial to ensuring we have the AEDs in locations necessary to save a life. Unfortunately Connecticut has fallen behind most other states in this regard.**

Each year, sudden cardiac arrest claims the lives of nearly 335,000 Americans before they reach the hospital. Many of these lives could be saved if bystanders act promptly to phone 9-1-1 and begin CPR, and use an automated external defibrillator (AED) within minutes.

Today less than 5% of sudden cardiac arrest victims survive. If emergency treatment is provided immediately, the American Heart Association estimates that perhaps as many as 40,000 of these lives can be saved. By increasing public access to automated external defibrillators we can save lives in our communities.

In cities/states with public access defibrillation programs when bystanders provide immediate CPR and deliver the first shock with 3 to 5 minutes, reported survival rates from sudden cardiac arrest is as high as 48 to 74%.

To close, early defibrillation is the best way to successfully treat most cardiac arrests. Time is critical. If a normal heart rhythm isn't restored in minutes, the person will die. For every minute without defibrillation, the chances of survival drop 7-10 percent. A cardiac arrest victim who isn't defibrillated within 8-10 minutes has little chance of survival. In order to improve survival rates and increase AED placement, we must expand Good Sam protection for the entity that purchases the AED and ensure that every health club is equipped to save someone suffering Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

On behalf of the American Heart Association, we urge the CT Legislature to pass Raised Bill 5503 and help save the lives of those who suffer sudden cardiac arrest.

Thank you,

Bill Thompson
Vice President, Advocacy
American Heart Association